



**STRATEGIC PLAN  
GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA  
2006-2011**

**Quote**

# **STRATEGIC PLAN**

## **Gulf County**



### **Board of County Commissioners**

**Carmen L. McLemore, District 1, Chairman**

**Billy E. Traylor, District 2**

**Bill Williams, District 3, Vice Chairman**

**Nathan Peters, Jr., District 4**

**Jerry W. Barnes, District 5**

**Quote**

**Quote**

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#### **STRATEGIC AREAS**

**Health Care**  
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**Education**  
**Public Safety**  
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**Environment**  
**Transportation**  
**Recreation and Culture**  
**Neighborhoods and Unincorporated Areas**



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# **Introduction**

## **Gulf County**



## **THE NEED TO PLAN**

**Gulf County is located in Florida’s Northwest Panhandle, approximately 25 miles southeast of Panama City and approximately 100 miles southwest of Tallahassee. Located on the coast of the Gulf of Mexico and with access to St. Joseph’s Bay and other water bodies, Gulf County offers a unique and scenic location to live, work, and play. These factors have contributed to the unprecedented development and increase in property values that has occurred over the last five years. As a result, elected officials are faced with increasingly complex decisions regarding managing growth, funding, infrastructure needs, and diversifying the economy. Citizens are very concerned about increasing property taxes, accountability of public officials, health care, protecting the environment and quality of life issues.**

**In order to address these issues in a comprehensive manner, the Board of County Commissioners appointed a Strategic Planning Committee in the spring of 2005.**

**The committee was charged with the development of a strategic plan that would serve as a game plan or blueprint to guide decision- making. This plan would also provide for government accountability and continuous improvement.**

## **GULF COUNTY’S STRATEGIC PLANNING PROCESS**

**The Strategic Planning Committee’s goal was to ensure that the strategic plan reflected the priorities of the citizens of Gulf County. The process utilized by the Committee included surveying, town hall meetings, and collaboration with key partners, such as the Health Care Committee, the Economic Development Council, and the Gulf County Housing CDC. The survey was mailed to all registered voters and was also published in local newspapers. The survey asked individuals to rank eight strategic areas regarding their importance. Write in comments were also solicited. The results of the survey showed that the number one priority was health care. Economic development was number two, education was number three. Public safety ranked number four, followed by housing at number five. The environment ranked sixth, transportation seventh and recreation/culture ranked eighth.**

**Due to the number of write in comments, an additional strategic area, “neighborhoods and unincorporated areas” was added, as well as, an**

**“enabling strategy” regarding budgeting and finance.**

**The survey results, town hall meetings and discussions with key partners resulted in the information that was used to develop the strategic plan.**

**It is the belief of the Strategic Planning Committee that this blueprint for Gulf County’s future, based on citizen input, reflects “The People’s Vision: The County’s Mission”.**

# THE VISION FOR THE FUTURE

## The Vision

To ensure that Gulf County is the ideal place to live, work and play now and in the future.

*The vision statement reflects what is important to the citizens of Gulf County now and in the future.*

## Mission

*The mission statement describes the expectations Gulf County citizens have for their local government.*

To deliver outstanding leadership and services that enhances that the quality of life for all Gulf County citizens

# GUIDING PRINCIPLES

*These guiding principles will guide the way we make our decisions and carry out actions everyday.*

**In Gulf County government, we are committed to being:**

**Accountable and Responsive to the Public**

**Valuing and Respectful of Each Other**

**Efficient and Effective**

**Customer-focused and Customer-driven**

**Action-Oriented**

# **PLAN OVERVIEW**

## **PRIORITY STRATEGIC THEMES**

*These broad themes serve as a guide to Gulf County government in planning for the future*

**Promote accountability at all levels of county government**

**Ensure that the Board of County Commissioners is good stewards of taxpayer's dollars**

**Ensure that Gulf County operates in a fiscally responsible manner**

**Maintain the quality of life for all Gulf County residents, while improving county wide services**

**Protect the safety of Gulf County citizens and property**

**Promote responsible and comprehensive policy development through effective planning for land use and growth management**

**Promote a healthy economy through business development and economic diversification**

**Protect and preserve Gulf County's unique environment**

# **COMMUNITY TRENDS**

## **GULF COUNTY, FLORIDA**

**Trends and events that are effecting and have the potential to continue to impact Gulf County were identified. These trends have the potential to impact the quality of life experienced by the citizens of Gulf County, and therefore, must be considered when planning for the future.**

**The major trends affecting Gulf County are:**

**RAPID GROWTH  
AND THE RESULTING IMPACTS**

**LACK OF POLICIES TO MANAGE GROWTH**

**INCREASING COST TO LIVE IN GULF COUNTY**

**INCREASED CITIZEN CONCERNS AND INVOLVEMENT,  
INCLUDING THE MANDATE FOR COUNTY WIDE VOTING**



# **GULF COUNTY'S STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES, OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS**

## **STRENGTHS**

**Climate**  
**Pristine Environment**  
**People**  
**Enterprise Zone**  
**Port Designation**  
**Intercoastal Waterway**  
**Family and Community Oriented**  
**Rail System**  
**Airport**  
**Workforce Programs**



## **WEAKNESSES**

**Lack of Coordinated Planning**  
**Rising Cost of Living**  
**Lack of Workforce Housing**  
**Lack of Career and Technical Education Programs**  
**No Public Transportation**  
**Dual Time Zones**  
**Water and Sewer Infrastructure**  
**Broadband Capacity**



## **OPPORTUNITIES**

**Regional Cooperation and Initiatives**  
**Community Land Trust**  
**Port Development**  
**Gulf Coast Parkway**



# **THREATS**

**Natural Disasters**

**High Taxes**

**Energy Crisis**

**Beach Erosion**

**Destruction of the Environment  
due to unplanned development**

**North/South Division**

**Loss of Historical/Culture Way of Life**

**Loss of RACEC (Rural Area of Critical Economic Concern)  
designation**

**Volatile Political Environment**

# **STRATEGIC AREAS**

**The following pages outline the strategic areas that are critical to Gulf County's future.**

**For each strategic area, the following are provided:**

**Strategic area "mission"**

**Goals**

**Key Outcomes**

**Strategies**

**The section regarding performance indicators/measures and required resources (money, staff, materials) has not been developed. It is highly recommended that this "accountability tool" be developed as soon as possible (see implementation recommendation) by the task force for each strategic area.**

**The strategic areas appear in priority order as determined from the results of the survey. Also, as a result of the written comments received from the survey, two additional strategic areas were added. These two strategic areas "neighborhoods and unincorporated areas" and "budgeting and finance" are very important to the citizens of Gulf County and should be considered as top priorities.**

# **HEALTH CARE**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**To improve the quality of life and health of Gulf County citizens by ensuring a comprehensive system of health care is available.**

## **GOALS**

**Ensure high quality standard of care and service Countywide**

**Eliminate barriers to care**

**Improve the future of Gulf County's children and youth**

## **KEY OUTCOMES**

**Healthier community**

**Reduction of unmet needs regarding health care**

**Increased public transportation to health and human services facilities in Gulf County and surrounding areas**

**Increased outreach/prevention and intervention services for Gulf County children, youth and their families**

**Increased opportunities for elders to live independently and participate in community activities**

## **STRATEGIES**

**Create a Gulf Care Network that integrates all health care service into a seamless system of healthcare**

**Advocate for programs to attract specialty providers (loan payoffs, housing allotments, zero interest loans, scholarships to local residents)**

**Provide residents with increased transportation services (waivers, indigent fares)**

**Provide educational opportunities for health care professionals (scholarships, interest free loans, 50% contribution by agencies)**

**Advocate for more classes to be offered in health care related fields in the public school system and Gulf Coast Community College**

**Contact surrounding medical and dental schools to recruit graduates to Gulf County**

**Promote affordable housing for providers and support staff by coordinating with housing partners to remove barriers to affordable and special needs housing**

**Pursue funding and support of a kidney dialysis center in Gulf County**

**Expand outreach efforts to educate the public regarding preventive care**

**Coordinate with all partners regarding increased services and support to senior citizens**

# STRATEGIC AREA HEALTH CARE

**MISSION STATEMENT — To improve the quality of life and health of Gulf County citizens by**

**ensuring a comprehensive system of health care is available.**

## GOALS — Ensure high quality standard of care and service Countywide Eliminate barriers to care

# Improve the future of Gulf County's children and youth

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
Healthier community	Create a Gulf Care Network that integrates all health care service into a seamless system of healthcare			
Reduction of unmet needs regarding health care				
Increased public transportation to health and human services facilities in Gulf County and surrounding areas	Advocate for programs to attract specialty providers (loan payoffs, housing allotments, zero interest loans, scholarships to local residents)			
Increased outreach/prevention and intervention services for GulfCounty children, youth and their families	Provide residents with increased transportation services (waivers, indigent fares)			
Increased opportunities for elders to live independently and participate in community activities	Provide educational opportunities for health care professionals (scholarships, interest free loans, 50% contribution by agencies)			
	Advocate for more classes to be offered in health care related fields in the public school system and Gulf Coast Community College			

## STRATEGIC AREA HEALTH CARE CONTINUED

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# **ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

**To expand and further diversify Gulf County's economy and employment opportunities while maintaining our unique identity and heritage.**

## **GOALS**

**Develop a unified political vision for Gulf County**

**Build a diversified economy**

**Enhance and improve regional transportation system**

**Build a 21<sup>st</sup> century health care system**

**Enhance access to affordable housing**

**Enhance all areas of comprehensive planning for efficient and effective growth management**

**Expand and enhance educational opportunities**

**Protect and enhance our natural, cultural and heritage resources**

**Expand entrepreneurial development opportunities within Gulf County**

**Lead the coordination of economic development activities throughout Gulf County**

## **KEY OUTCOMES**

**Identification of emerging targeted industries**

**Increased number of businesses and employment opportunities in higher-paying, targeted industries**



**Increased number of county residents with the job skills to obtain and retain high skill, high wage employment**

**Increased number of low to moderate income homeowners**

**Improved infrastructure and redevelopment to attract businesses to Gulf County with specific attention to underserved and distressed areas**

**Coordinated and effective economic and community development programs**

**Resource maximization based on leveraging federal, state and other funds**

**Businesses and organizations provided with the technical and management capacity to succeed**

## **STRATEGIES**

**Host quarterly meetings with all local government and agencies to develop and coordinate strategic planning**

**Identify the industries that Gulf County would like to attract and develop an industry profile to assist in recruitment**

**Develop a viable Port**

**Develop an Incubator Program**

**Develop a Tourism Hub**

**Develop an Industrial Park**

**Support existing seafood and freshwater fish industry**

**Recruit hotels and restaurants**

**Improve waterfront areas**

**Enhance tourism opportunities**

**Public/Private transportation to Tallahassee airports**

**Continue support for Gulf Coast Parkway**

**Additional crossroads developed within county**

**Develop an inland shipping program**

**Four lane Highway 71**

**Expand Tapper Bridge**

**Build a new hospital**

**Recruit specialty care providers**

**Provide an urgent health care facility in north Gulf County**

**Enhance emergency response**

**Support the Housing Community Development Corporation and the development of a community land trust**

**Support Habitat for Humanity of Gulf County**

**Encourage intra-local planning with county and cities regarding growth patterns and infrastructure development**

**Establish quarterly communication meetings with cities, county, EDC, schools, and the planning review board**

**Support and enhance the Dupont Scholarship Program**

**Develop workforce re-entry assistance program**

**Support Technical education programs**

**Develop articulation agreements between public schools/technical centers and community colleges**

**Encourage the Economic Development Council to become involved with local educational institutions**

**Support local tourism efforts and festivals**

**Protect and preserve homestead exemption and portability issues**

**Establish commercial mooring**

**Support commercial fishing**

**Support recreational fishing programs, businesses and opportunities**

**Protect and preserve rivers and natural waterways**

**Explore establishing eco-tourism opportunities**

**Explore establishing cultural tourism attractions**

**Host community classes to teach the history of  
Gulf County**

**Protect and preserve St. Joseph's Bay**

# STRATEGIC AREA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**MISSION STATEMENT** — To expand and further diversify Gulf County’s economy and employment opportunities while maintaining our unique identity and heritage.

## GOALS

- Develop a unified political vision for Gulf County
  - Build a diversified economy
  - Enhance and improve regional transportation system
  - Build a 21<sup>st</sup> century health care system
  - Enhance access to affordable housing
  - Enhance all areas of comprehensive planning for efficient and effective growth management
  - Expand and enhance educational opportunities
- Protect and enhance our natural, cultural and heritage resources
  - Expand entrepreneurial development opportunities within Gulf County
  - Lead the coordination of economic development activities throughout Gulf County

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
Identification of emerging targeted industries	Host quarterly meetings with all local government and agencies to develop and coordinate strategic planning			
Increased number of businesses and employment opportunities in higher-paying, targeted industries	Identify the industries that Gulf County would like to attract and develop an industry profile to assist in recruitment			
Increased number of county residents with the job skills to obtain and retain high skill, high wage employment	Develop a viable Port			
	Develop an Incubator Program			
Increased number of low to moderate income homeowners	Develop a Tourism Hub Develop an Industrial Park			
Improved infrastructure and redevelopment to attract businesses to Gulf County with specific attention to underserved and distressed areas	Support existing seafood and freshwater fish industry			
	Recruit hotels and restaurants			
	Improve waterfront areas			

## STRATEGIC AREA DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
Coordinated and effective economic and community development programs	Enhance tourism opportunities			
	Public/Private transportation to Tallahassee airports			
	Continue support for Gulf Coast Parkway			
Resource maximization based on leveraging federal, state and other funds	Additional crossroads developed within county			
	Develop an inland shipping program			
Businesses and organizations provided with the technical and management capacity to succeed	Four lane Highway 71			
	Expand Tapper Bridge			
	Build a new hospital			
	Recruit specialty care providers			
	Provide an urgent health care facility in north Gulf County			
	Enhance emergency response			
	Support the Housing Community Development Corporation and the development of a community land trust			
	Support Habitat for Humanity of Gulf County			
	Encourage intra-local planning with county and cities regarding growth patterns and infrastructure development			
	Establish quarterly communication meetings with cities, county, EDC, schools, and the planning review board			

# STRATEGIC AREA DEVELOPMENT CONTINUED

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
	Support and enhance the Dupont Scholarship Program			
	Develop workforce re-entry assistance program			
	Support Technical education programs			
	Develop articulation agreements between public schools/technical centers and community colleges			
	Encourage the Economic Development Council to become involved with local educational institutions			
	Support local tourism efforts and festivals			
	Protect and preserve homestead exemption and portability issues			
	Establish commercial mooring			
	Support commercial fishing			
	Support recreational fishing programs, businesses and opportunities			
	Protect and preserve rivers and natural waterways			
	Explore establishing eco-tourism opportunities			
	Explore establishing cultural tourism attractions			
	Host community classes to teach the history of Gulf County			
	Protect and preserve St. Joseph's Bay			

## **EDUCATION**

### **MISSION STATEMENT**

**To partner with educational institutions and programs serving Gulf County to ensure that all Gulf County citizens have the knowledge and skills to achieve economic self sufficiency, an enhanced quality of life, and are prepared to continue their education.**

### **GOALS**

**Strengthen the collaboration between the Board of County Commissioners and local educational institutions and programs in order to meet the educational goals of individuals and the economic and quality of life goals of Gulf County**

### **KEY OUTCOMES**

**Increased number of high school graduates with job skills**

**Increased number of county residents with the job skills to achieve economic self sufficiency**

**Increased program and curriculum offerings to prepare for continuing education**

**Increased opportunities for life-long learning, including retraining and upgrading job skills for all citizens**

**Increased focus on healthier lifestyles**

### **STRATEGIES**

**Advocate for increased career and vocational education programs in local educational institutions which support the county's economic development goals**

**Partner with local educational institutions and programs to expand the opportunity for community employment training programs**

**Advocate for program and curriculum offerings designed to prepare individuals for continuing education**

**Advocate for increased adult education programs to include basic skills, parenting, and nutrition.**

**Partner with local businesses, the Regional Workforce Board, and educational institutions to meet the training needs for employees**

**Partner with educational institutions and other community programs to determine and meet the lifelong learning needs of citizens**



# STRATEGIC AREA EDUCATION

**MISSION STATEMENT** — To partner with educational institutions and programs serving Gulf County to ensure that all Gulf County citizens have the knowledge and skills to achieve economic self sufficiency, an enhanced quality of life, and are prepared to continue their education.

**GOALS** — Strengthen the collaboration between the Board of County Commissioners and local educational institutions and programs in order to meet the educational goals of individuals and the economic and quality of life goals of Gulf County

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
Increased number of high school graduates with job skills	Advocate for increased career and vocational education programs in local educational institutions which support the county's economic development goals			
Increased number of county residents with the job skills to achieve economic self sufficiency				
Increased program and curriculum offerings to prepare for continuing education	Partner with local educational institutions and programs to expand the opportunity for community employment training programs			
Increased opportunities for life-long learning, including retraining and upgrading job skills for all citizens	Advocate for program and curriculum offerings designed to prepare individuals for continuing education			
Increased focus on healthier lifestyles	Advocate for increased adult education programs to include basic skills, parenting, and nutrition.			
	Partner with local businesses, the Regional Workforce Board,			



# **PUBLIC SAFETY**

## **MISSION**

**To provide a safe and secure community through coordinated efficient and effective professional public safety services.**

## **GOALS**

**Effectively provide the necessary and appropriate people, buildings, equipment and technology to protect the lives and property of Gulf County citizens**

**Improve public safety through the use of community planning and the enforcement of laws and ordinances**

## **KEY OUTCOMES**

**Public safety facilities and resources built and maintained to meet needs**

**Reduction in property loss and destruction**

**Increased community awareness of public safety**

**Expand ability to shelter the public in response to large scale public emergency events**

**Easy and coordinated access to information by departments and service delivery partners**

**Reduced substance abuse**

**Resident and visitor safety awareness and preparedness for all segments of the community**

**Safer communities**

**Eradication of unwanted animals from public streets**

## **STRATEGIES**

**Plan for and provide appropriate and necessary resources to protect the public**

**Coordinate planning among and between public safety agencies to enhance effectiveness of existing facilities and infrastructure**

**Develop and implement an integrated public safety information technology plan**

**Continually maintain an inventory of all facilities in the area with the potential for dual use in providing emergency shelter, including infrastructure upgrades required for dual use as an emergency shelter**

**Increase the number and capacity of shelters available to Gulf County citizens during an emergency**

**Enhance systems and technology for management reporting and to share information among departments**

**Expand anti-drug programs in schools and provide drug rehabilitation assistance/programs**

**Expand access to adult drug education/treatment programs**

**Continually solicit community input and feedback through public safety outreach events**

**Enhance existing sources of information and feedback including web access**

**Coordinate with Building and Planning and Zoning Departments regarding community design to improve designs in support of public safety**

**Increase voluntary compliance with animal control regulations through education and canvassing initiatives and the promotion of low cost neutering**

**Remove nuisance and dead animals from neighborhoods in a timely manner**

# STRATEGIC AREA PUBLIC SAFETY

**MISSION STATEMENT** — To provide a safe and secure community through coordinated efficient and effective professional public safety services.

**GOALS** — Effectively provide the necessary and appropriate people, buildings, equipment and technology to protect the lives and property of Gulf County citizens

Improve public safety through the use of community planning and the enforcement of laws and ordinances

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
Public safety facilities and resources built and maintained to meet needs	Plan for and provide appropriate and necessary resources to protect the public			
Reduction in property loss and destruction	Coordinate planning among and between public safety agencies to enhance effectiveness of existing facilities and infrastructure			
Increased community awareness of public safety				
Expand ability to shelter the public in response to large scale public emergency events	Develop and implement an integrated public safety information technology plan			
Easy and coordinated access to information by departments and service delivery partners	Continually maintain an inventory of all facilities in the area with the potential for dual use in providing emergency shelter, including infrastructure upgrades required for dual use as an emergency shelter			
Reduced substance abuse				
Resident and visitor safety awareness and preparedness for all segments of the community	Increase the number and capacity of shelters available to Gulf County citizens during an emergency			
Safer communities				
Eradication of unwanted animals from public streets				

# STRATEGIC AREA PUBLIC SAFETY CONTINUED

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
	Enhance systems and technology for management reporting and to share information among departments			
	Expand anti-drug programs in schools and provide drug rehabilitation assistance/programs			
	Expand access to adult drug education/treatment programs			
	Continually solicit community input and feedback through public safety outreach events			
	Enhance existing sources of information and feedback including web access			
	Coordinate with Building and Planning and Zoning Departments regarding community design to improve designs in support of public safety			
	Increase voluntary compliance with animal control regulations through education and canvassing initiatives and the promotion of low cost neutering			
	Remove nuisance and dead animals from neighborhoods in a timely manner			

## **AFFORDABLE HOUSING MISSION**

**To partner with community organizations and businesses to create and preserve affordable housing options to meet the needs of Gulf County citizens and enhance economic development opportunities**

## **GOALS**

**Provide adequate, safe, and affordable housing equitably throughout Gulf County**

## **KEY OUTCOMES**

**Increased availability of affordable housing equitably throughout Gulf County**

**Increased number of low-to-moderate income homeowners**

## **STRATEGIES**

**Utilize the Gulf County Housing CDC as the clearing house for housing issues**

**Create a community land trust**

**Establish a homeownership center**

**Maximize the Gulf County SHIP funding**

**Remove barriers to affordable housing**

**Provide incentives to encourage affordable housing**

**Pursue additional revenue sources to fund affordable housing initiatives**

# STRATEGIC AREA HOUSING

**MISSION STATEMENT — To partner with community organizations and businesses to create and preserve affordable housing options to meet the needs of Gulf County citizens and enhance economic development opportunities**

## GOALS — Provide adequate, safe, and affordable housing equitably throughout Gulf County

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
Increased availability of affordable housing equitably throughout Gulf County	Utilize the Gulf County Housing CDC as the clearing house for housing issues			
Increased number of low-to-moderate income homeowners	Create a community land trust			
	Establish a homeownership center			
	Maximize the Gulf County SHIP funding			
	Remove barriers to affordable housing			
	Provide incentives to encourage affordable housing			
	Pursue additional revenue sources to fund affordable housing initiatives			



# **ENVIRONMENT**

## **MISSION**

**To protect and preserve Gulf County's unique environment and natural resources**

## **GOALS**

**Preserve Gulf County's unique environment and natural resources**

**Maintain the natural beauty of Gulf County**

**Promote responsible stewardship of natural resources and unique community environments**

## **KEY OUTCOMES**

**Environmentally- sensitive lands in Gulf County are preserved**

**The pristine waters of St. Joseph's Bay, the Gulf and other waterways in Gulf County are preserved**

**The unique and endangered wildlife in Gulf County are protected**

**Increased awareness of the value and importance of protecting environmentally-sensitive lands and natural resources**

**Increased personal responsibility by the citizens and visitors to Gulf County to protect Gulf County's unique environment**

## **STRATEGIES**

**Ensure that all current laws, regulations, policies and ordinances designed to protect and preserve Gulf County's natural resources are consistently enforced**

**Develop and implement the Long Range Beach Management Plan in conjunction with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection**

**Utilize appropriate research, data and other resources, including consultants to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to protect and preserve Gulf County's unique environment**

**Develop and implement a plan to educate Gulf County residents and visitors regarding the importance of protecting the environment and the individual actions they can take**

# STRATEGIC AREA ENVIRONMENT

# MISSION STATEMENT — To protect and preserve Gulf County's unique environment and natural resources

**GOALS — Preserve Gulf County’s unique environment and natural resources**  
**Maintain the natural beauty of Gulf County**  
**Promote responsible stewardship of natural resources and unique community environments**

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
Environmentally- sensitive lands in Gulf County are preserved	Ensure that all current laws, regulations, policies and ordinances designed to protect and preserve Gulf County’s natural resources are consistently enforced			
The pristine waters of St. Joseph’s Bay, the Gulf and other waterways in Gulf County are preserved	Develop and implement the Long Range Beach Management Plan in conjunction with the Florida Department of Environmental Protection			
The unique and endangered wildlife in Gulf County are protected				
Increased awareness of the value and importance of protecting environmentally-sensitive lands and natural resources	Utilize appropriate research, data and other resources, including consultants to develop and implement a comprehensive plan to protect and preserve Gulf County’s unique environment			
Increased personal responsibility by the citizens and visitors to Gulf County to protect Gulf County’s unique environment	Develop and implement a plan to educate Gulf County residents and visitors regarding the importance of protecting the environment and the individual actions they can take			

# **TRANSPORTATION**

## **MISSION**

**To develop and maintain an effective transportation system that meets the needs of Gulf County citizens.**

## **GOALS**

**Enhance and improve the regional transportation system**

**Encourage and promote innovative solutions to transportation challenges**

## **KEY OUTCOMES**

**Expanded public transportation to health and human services throughout Gulf County and the surrounding area**

**Increased commerce and job creation**

## **STRATEGIES**

**Develop and implement a comprehensive plan and approach to transportation needs and challenges**

**Coordinate with and support the recommendations and needs of the Port Authority**

**Consider the recommendations of the Airport Committee**

**Collaborate with and support Gulf County Transportation**

**Create carpool and vanpool programs**

# STRATEGIC AREA TRANSPORTATION

**MISSION STATEMENT** — To develop and maintain an effective transportation system that meets the needs of Gulf County citizens.

**GOALS** — Enhance and improve the regional transportation system  
Encourage and promote innovative solutions to transportation challenges

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
Expanded public transportation to health and human services throughout Gulf County and the surrounding area	Develop and implement a comprehensive plan and approach to transportation needs and challenges			
Increased commerce and job creation	Coordinate with and support the recommendations and needs of the Port Authority			
	Consider the recommendations of the Airport Committee			
	Collaborate with and support Gulf County Transportation			
	Create carpool and vanpool programs			

# **RECREATION AND CULTURE**

## **MISSION**

**To develop, promote and preserve outstanding recreational, cultural, library and natural experiences for residents and visitors of Gulf County**

## **GOALS**

**Establish easily accessible, diverse and enjoyable programs, services and facilities to meet Gulf County's unique and growing needs**

**Establish strong partnerships with organizations providing and promoting recreation and cultural opportunities**

**Establish Gulf County as a community that is recognized for its support and promotion of art, music and other cultural experiences**

**Participation in and awareness of programs and services**

**Develop lifelong learning opportunities through education, outreach and training partnerships**

## **KEY OUTCOMES**

**Consistently well-maintained, attractive and safe parks, libraries, museums, facilities, and public artwork**

**Available and high quality green space throughout the County**

**Expanded awareness of and access to cultural, recreational and library programs and services**

**Increased participation in recreation/leisure/cultural programs and services**

## **STRATEGIES**

**Develop and implement a plan for ensuring that all parks, facilities and county owned land are consistently well maintained**

**Develop and implement a plan to preserve green and open space as development occurs**

**Prepare and maintain ongoing, regular assessments of community needs and desires regarding facilities and parks**

**Develop and strengthen partnerships with non-profit entities, private sector partners and volunteer groups**

**Redesign and expand county websites to provide one stop access to cultural, recreational and library activities and organizations**

**Provide coordinated public transportation to cultural, recreational and library events**

**Work with the Gulf County Public Schools and other educational institutions to develop joint, complementary programs**

**Partner with the Health Department to offer exercise classes to promote healthier lifestyles**

# STRATEGIC AREA RECREATION AND CULTURE

**MISSION STATEMENT** — To develop, promote and preserve outstanding recreational, cultural, library and natural experiences for residents and visitors of Gulf County

- GOALS** — Establish easily accessible, diverse and enjoyable programs, services and facilities to meet Gulf County’s unique and growing needs  
Establish strong partnerships with organizations providing and promoting recreation and cultural opportunities  
Establish Gulf County as a community that is recognized for its support and promotion of art, music and other cultural experiences  
Participation in and awareness of programs and services  
Develop lifelong learning opportunities through education, outreach and training partnerships

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
Consistently well-maintained, attractive and safe parks, libraries, museums, facilities, and public artwork	Develop and implement a plan for ensuring that all parks, facilities and county owned land are consistently well maintained			
Available and high quality green space throughout the County	Develop and implement a plan to preserve green and open space as development occurs			
Expanded awareness of and access to cultural, recreational and library programs and services	Prepare and maintain ongoing, regular assessments of community needs and desires regarding facilities and parks			
Increased participation in recreation/leisure/cultural programs and services	Develop and strengthen partnerships with non-profit entities, private sector partners and volunteer groups			





# **NEIGHBORHOOD AND UNINCORPORATED AREA SERVICES**

## **MISSION**

**To provide efficient, accountable and accessible services that enhances the quality of life and involves the community**

## **GOALS**

**Provide efficient, consistent, and appropriate growth management, urban planning and transportation development services**

**Empower the community by increasing communication and coordination with local, state, and federal entities**

**Use consistent, fair, and effective means to achieve code compliance**

**Enact programs to beautify and improve Gulf County**

**Provide timely and reliable infrastructure services including road maintenance, storm water, solid waste and wastewater management, and a safe and clean water delivery system**

## **KEY OUTCOMES**

**Improved community design**

**Improved community access to information and services**

**Resident and business voluntary compliance with county codes**

**Timely identification and removal of nuisances, including unsafe structures**

**Neighborhood and right-of-way beautification**

**Improved roadways, drainage and reduced flooding**

**Consistent interpretation and application of enforcement practices**

# **STRATEGIES**

**Identify areas and neighborhoods in need of improvements**

**Prioritize recommended improvements to these areas**

**Establish a structure and process to obtain community opinions on relevant community issues and provide timely response to issues raised**

**Expand the local community presence of the Board of County Commissioners through outreach and technology**

**Provide more information through the County web site**

**Expand community education sessions regarding county Codes and enforcement**

**Develop and maintain educated code compliance staff**

**Periodically review code regulations**

**Increase litter pick-up and removal**

**Increase enforcement of illegal dumping and littering**

**Work with local communities to identify opportunities for beautification**

**Develop inventory of existing roadway and drainage maintenance needs**

**Allocate necessary resources to provide level-of-service desired by the citizens of Gulf County**

**Prioritize water and sewer improvements, including areas needing service**

**Educate the community on costs of the improvements**

**Pursue funding for identified improvements, including alternative funding sources**

**STRATEGIC AREA A NEIGHBORHOODS AND UNINCORPORATED AREAS**

**MISSION STATEMENT** — To provide efficient, accountable and accessible services that enhances the quality of life and involves the community

**GOALS** — Provide efficient, consistent, and appropriate growth management, urban planning and transportation development services  
Empower the community by increasing communication and coordination with local, state, and federal entities  
Use consistent, fair, and effective means to achieve code compliance  
Enact programs to beautify and improve Gulf County  
Provide timely and reliable infrastructure services including road maintenance, storm water, solid waste and wastewater management, and a safe and clean water delivery system

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
Improved community design	Identify areas and neighborhoods in need of improvements			
Improved community access to information and services	Prioritize recommended improvements to these areas			
Resident and business voluntary compliance with county codes	Establish a structure and process to obtain community opinions on relevant community issues and provide timely response to issues raised			
Timely identification and removal of nuisances, including unsafe structures				
Neighborhood and right-of-way beautification	Expand the local community presence of the Board of County Commissioners through outreach and technology			
Improved roadways, drainage and reduced flooding				
Consistent interpretation and application of enforcement practices	Provide more information through the County web site			

STRATEGIC AREA A NEIGHBORHOODS AND UNINCORPORATED AREAS CONTINUED

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
	Expand community education sessions regarding county Codes and enforcement			
	Develop and maintain educated code compliance staff			
	Periodically review code regulations			
	Increase litter pick-up and removal			
	Increase enforcement of illegal dumping and littering			
	Work with local communities to identify opportunities for beautification			
	Develop inventory of existing roadway and drainage maintenance needs			
	Allocate necessary resources to provide level-of-service desired by the citizens of Gulf County			
	Prioritize water and sewer improvements, including areas needing service			
	Educate the community on costs of the improvements			
	Pursue funding for identified improvements, including alternative funding sources			

# **ENABLING STRATEGIES: BUDGET AND FINANCE**

## **MISSION**

**To provide transparent, responsive, and accountable budget and financial management based on the priorities of the citizens of Gulf County**

## **GOALS**

**Ensure the financial viability of Gulf County through sound financial management practices**

**To be able to answer the questions that the citizens of Gulf County have regarding the budget, expenditures and services provided**

**A budget that is based on the priorities of the citizens of Gulf County**

**Deliver on promises and be accountable for performance**

## **KEY OUTCOMES**

**Alignment of services and expenditures provided with the community's needs and desires**

**The necessary resources to meet current and future operating and capital needs**

**Cohesive, standardized countywide financial systems and processes**

**Accountable, documented, and responsive procurement process**

**Sound asset management**

**Accountability to the public at every level of county government**

**Reduction in taxes**

## **STRATEGIES**

**Implement true zero based budgeting**

**Align the budget and spending decisions with the Gulf County Strategic Plan**

**Establish performance measures for each department**

**Reestablish the Budget Review Committee and implement their recommendations**

**Hire a chief financial officer**

**Outreach to citizens to ensure their priorities are reflected in the budget and that their needs are being met**

# STRATEGIC AREA ENABLING STRATEGIES: BUDGET & FINANCE

**MISSION STATEMENT** — To provide transparent, responsive, and accountable budget and financial management based on the priorities of the citizens of Gulf County

**GOALS** — Ensure the financial viability of Gulf County through sound financial management practices  
To be able to answer the questions that the citizens of Gulf County have regarding the budget, expenditures and services provided  
A budget that is based on the priorities of the citizens of Gulf County  
Deliver on promises and be accountable for performance

KEY OUTCOMES	STRATEGIES	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	REQUIRED RESOURCES	TIMELINES
Alignment of services and expenditures provided with the community's needs and desires	Implement true zero based budgeting			
The necessary resources to meet current and future operating and capital needs	Align the budget and spending decisions with the Gulf County Strategic Plan			
Cohesive, standardized countywide financial systems and processes	Establish performance measures for each department			
Accountable, documented, and responsive procurement process	Reestablish the Budget Review Committee and implement their recommendations			
Sound asset management	Hire a chief financial officer			
Accountability to the public at every level of county government	Outreach to citizens to ensure their priorities are reflected in the budget and that their needs are being met			
Reduction in taxes				



# **IMPLEMENTATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

**In order to ensure that this strategic plan truly serves as the blueprint for Gulf County's future, the following is recommended:**

**Adopt the Strategic Plan.**

**Establish an "implementation task force" for each of the 9 strategic areas and the enabling strategy. Each task force would be comprised of citizens, the appropriate county staff and other individuals with expertise in the specific area.**

**Each task force would recommend appropriate performance measures, resource requirements, and timelines for their respective goals for approval by the Board of County Commissioners.**

**Once the work of the task forces is approved by the BOCC, revise the strategic plan to include performance measures and timelines.**

**Assign the county department heads the goals, outcomes and performance measures and timelines appropriate for their area and hold them accountable for meeting the performance measures.**

**Identify key partners needed to implement the strategic plan and collaborate with them on their role and contributions**

**Align all spending and hiring decisions to the strategic plan.**

**Review the progress towards meeting the goals and performance measures identified in the Strategic Plan at least twice a year. This review should be conducted by a citizens committee and results presented to the Board of County Commissioners for their response.**

**Revise the Strategic Plan as often as needed; using citizen input to ensure that it continues to be relevant.**

# GULF COUNTY

## 2005-2006 PROFILE

### GEOGRAPHY

#### County Seat:

Port St. Joe

#### Nearest MSA: Panama City MSA

Time Zone\* ..... Central/Eastern

Local Area Code ..... 850

County Land Area (sq. mi.) ..... 555

Population Density (sq mi) ..... 27

Population of surrounding four

Counties: ..... 179,312

\*North Gulf County Central Time Zone

South Gulf County Eastern Time Zone

### POPULATION

	<u>Gulf</u>	<u>Florida</u>
1990:	11,504	12,938,071
2001:	15,075	16,330,601
2004	13,816	16,999,181
2010(P)	16,566	19,397,414
2015(P)	17,136	21,000,845

(P) Denotes Projected Population

### MIGRATION

(2003)

In-Migration ..... 657

Out Migration ..... 615

Net-Migration ..... -42

#### Percentage by Age Breakdown (2002)

0-14 ..... 2,377

15-24 ..... 1,780

25-64 ..... 4,797

65+ ..... 2,272

COUNTY/POPULATION (2002) ..... 15,202

Port St. Joe ..... 3,679

Wewahitchka ..... 1,694

Unincorporated ..... 9,829

### LABOR FORCE

(2005)

County Civilian Labor Force ..... 6,385

Labor Force % of County Population ..... 40.6

Unemployment Rate (5/05) ..... 4.4

Labor Force of (4) Surrounding Counties .....

.. 94,633

### EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

(2003)

Total Employment ..... 5,180

Construction ..... 5.1%

Education & Health Services ..... 22.9%

Fin., Ins. & Real Estate ..... 5.2%

Government ..... 26.5%

Manufacturing ..... 3.1%

Natural Resources & Mining ..... 2.1%

Services ..... 4.8%

Trade, Transportation/Utilities ..... 17.7%

#### Average Wage in Industries

(2003)

All Industries (County Avg.) ..... \$26,186

Construction ..... \$23,392

Education & Health Services ..... \$26,933

Fin., Ins. & Real Estate ..... \$20,752

Government ..... \$29,809

Manufacturing ..... \$25,788

Natural Resources & Mining ..... \$41,054

Services ..... \$30,113

Trade, Transportation/Utilities ..... \$25,805

### COUNTY TAXES

#### Ad Valorem Millage Rates (2004)

County ..... 6.2646

School Board ..... 006.68

Water Management ..... 0.0500

Total ..... 13.4946

Ad Valorem Tax Exemption ..... Yes

Retail Sales Tax (Local Option) .... 0.05%

Utility Service Tax/Rate ..... 0.0

State Enterprise Zone ..... EZ-2301

### STATE TAXES

Corporate Income Tax ..... 5.5%

Personal Income Tax ..... 0%

Retail Sales Tax ..... 6.5%

Gasoline Tax/Gallon ..... \$0.125

Intangible Tax (\$1.00 per \$1,000) ..... 1-1½%

### QUALITY OF LIFE

#### Per Capita Personal Income

	<u>Gulf</u>	<u>Florida</u>
1999	\$16,931	\$27,781
2000	\$16,627	\$28,366
2001	\$17,235	\$29,048
2002	\$18,285	\$29,758
2003	\$20,571	\$30,098

Fin., Ins. & Real Estate \$25,689

### COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Foreign Trade Zone ..... No

World Trade Council ..... No

Enterprise Zone (EZ-2301) ..... yes

HUBZone Eligible ..... yes

### FINANCIAL

#### Banks/Financial Standing:

Number of Banks ..... 5

Number of Banking Offices ..... 9

Total Deposits: ..... \$2,691,151

Credit Unions ..... 2

Does local Government Issue Industrial Revenue Bonds? ..... Yes

Is Tax Increment Financing Available? ..... Yes

## UTILITIES

### ELECTRIC COMPANIES

Progress Energy  
Gulf Coast Electric Cooperative, (REA)  
Lighthouse Utilities

### WATER

City of Port St. Joe  
City of Wewahitchka  
Lighthouse Utilities Company, Inc.  
City of Mexico Beach

Major water source ..... Deep Wells  
Water available for new industry ..... Yes

### SANITATION

Storm Sewer ..... Yes  
Sanitary Sewer ..... Yes  
Sewage Treatment Type:  
Advanced Waste Water Treatment  
Solid Waste Disposal  
Waste to Energy Incinerator, Landfill  
Sewerage Available  
For New Industry ..... Yes

### NATURAL GAS COMPANIES

St Joe Natural Gas  
Amerigas  
Gas Available for New Industry ..... Yes

## INDUSTRIAL SUPPORT SERVICES

Computer Services ..... Yes  
Engineering ..... Yes  
Plating ..... No  
Machine Shop ..... Yes  
Car and Truck Rental ..... Yes  
Job Printing ..... Yes  
Bonded Warehousing ..... Yes  
Freight Forwarder ..... Yes

## INDUSTRIAL PARKS

Industrial Parks/Properties ..... 5  
Number of acres ..... 1,143  
Largest available contiguous parcel . 140

## MAJOR PRIVATE SECTOR EMPLOYERS

### EMPLOYER/INDUSTRY/EMPLOYEES

1. GT Com Telecommunications Employees .....	172
2. Bay St. Joseph Care & Rehab Center Nursing Home & Rehab Employees .....	142
3. Taunton Industries Truss, wall panels Employees .....	138
4. Arizona Chemical Company Chemicals Employees .....	85
5. Raffield Fisheries, Inc. Seafood Employees .....	75
6. Duren's Piggly Wiggly Supermarket Employees .....	70
7. Premier Refractories, Inc. Chemicals Employees .....	40
8. Gulf Coast Electric Cooperative Electric Coop Employees .....	30
9. Geri-Care Assisted Living & Rehab Center Employees .....	25
10. Wood's Fisheries Seafood Employees .....	18
11. Bayside Lumber Lumber & Building supplies Employees .....	15
12. St. Joe Natural Gas Natural Gas Employees .....	15

## TRANSPORTATION

Major Highways ..... US 98  
State Highway ..... SR 71  
Major Commercial Airport: .....  
Panama City/Bay County International  
..... Airport  
Distance from County Seat ..... 34 Miles  
Length of Longest Runway ..... 6,308

# Runway ..... 2  
General Aviation Airports .....  
..... Apalachicola Municipal Airport  
..... Costin Airport  
Local Deep Water Port ..... Port St. Joe  
Distance from County Seat ..... 2 miles

Authorized Depth ..... 35'

Current Depth ..... 27'  
Warehousing ..... No

Stevedoring ..... No

Cold Storage: .....  
..... 10 Million Lb. Capacity Freezer  
Existing Deep Water: .....  
..... 1,600 ft Bulkhead  
Nearest Port with Docking Facilities: .....  
..... Port of Panama City

### Coordinated Transportation Available:

Special needs, elderly ..... Yes  
Gulf County Coordinated Transportation  
Public Transportation Available ..... No

## RECREATION

Beaches ..... Yes  
Boating ..... Yes  
City/state parks ..... Yes  
Country clubs ..... Yes  
Fishing ..... Yes  
Golf courses ..... Yes  
Hunting ..... Yes  
Movie theaters ..... No  
Museums ..... Yes  
Pari-Mutual Wagering ..... No  
Public Swimming pools ..... No  
Symphony ..... No  
Tennis courts ..... Yes  
Zoo ..... No

## COMMUNICATIONS

### NEWSPAPERS

Local ..... *The Star*  
Weekly Circulation ..... 5,200  
Largest Circulation ..... Gulf County  
Total Circulation ..... 5,200

Local ..... *The Breeze*  
Bi-Monthly Circulation ..... 2,500  
Largest Circulation ..... Gulf County  
Total Circulation ..... 2,500

Local *Panhandle Beacon/Hook & Trigger*  
Monthly Circulation ..... 20,000  
Largest Circulation ..... Gulf County  
Total Circulation ..... 20,000

## TELEVISION

Number of Cable Companies ..... 1  
Number of Television Stations..... 1

## RADIO STATION

Number of FM Radio Stations ..... 2

## TELEPHONE

Telephone Service Company: ....GTCom  
Number of Cellular/Wireless..... 3

## MAIL/PARCEL

Nearest Regional Mail  
Handling Facility ..... Port St. Joe/  
.....Wewahitchka  
Parcel Service..... Yes  
Air/Overnight Parcel Service..... Yes

## EDUCATION

Public Schools	Teachers	Enrollment
Elem.	2	936
Middle	2	772
Sr. High	2	442
Totals:	6	2,150

Private Schools Available: ..... Yes

2004	Gulf Co.	National Avg.
ACT	19.9	20.09
SAT	1063.5	1019

Graduation Rate ('03-'04) ..... 92.41%

In 2002-03, there were 126 high school graduates with 83.8% continuing their education. 1.4% dropout rate.

## POST SECONDARY EDUCATION

### COLLEGES/UNIVERSITIES Branches Serving the County

1. Florida State Univ., Panama City
2. Troy State University, Tyndall AFB
3. Embry-Riddle University, Tyndall AFB

### COMMUNITY COLLEGES (50-mile radius)

1. Gulf/Franklin Center, GCCC,  
Port St. Joe – (661 students)

2. Gulf Coast Community College,  
Panama City – (8,000 students)

## VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL SCHOOLS (50-mile radius)

1. Tom P. Haney Technical Center,  
Lynn Haven

Curricula offered in Vo-Tech Schools:  
Data Processing\* ..... Yes  
Welding and Cutting..... Yes  
Electrical Wiring ..... Yes  
Aviation/Avionics ..... Yes  
Drafting\* ..... Yes  
Sheet Metal ..... Yes  
Machine Shop ..... Yes  
Electronic Technology..... Yes  
Laser Electro Optics..... No  
Biomedical Technology..... No  
Robotics/Computer-aided Mfg\* ..... No

\* Offered at Gulf/Franklin Center

## MEDICAL

Lab Services ..... 2  
Advance Walk-In Clinic ..... 1  
Hospital (due Summer 2007) ..... 1  
Nursing Homes ..... 1  
Number of Beds ..... 190  
Assisted Living (19 beds) ..... 1

Physicians ..... 12  
Dentists ..... 4

## PLACES OF WORSHIP

Catholic ..... 2  
Protestant..... 39

## BUSINESS INCENTIVES

- Property Tax Exemptions for new and expanding businesses that meet hiring requirements.
- Enterprise Florida Capital Partnership will leverage private investment for small and start-up companies.
- Quick Response program provides start-up training.
- Florida Centers of Education supply skilled employees for high-tech industries

- Funds for building and improving transportation facilities.
- Private activity bonds.
- Innovation and Commercialization Corps help speed the commercialization of new technologies.
- Loans for new and expanding businesses.
- Low-interest loans for small businesses to improve energy efficiency.
- Manufacturing extension partnership provides management extension and support.
- Sales and use tax exemptions for manufacturing equipment, the labor component of R&D, the entertainment industry, and commercial space activity.
- Seaport employment training grants programs that improve the movement of cargo and passengers.
- Tax refunds of up to \$5,000 per job for companies in target industries that meet wage and hiring requirements.
- Technology research innovation program funds up to 50 percent of research costs for commercial product development; repayment through royalties is required.
- Capital Investment Tax Credit available to high impact businesses, like silicon technology, in Florida.

## PRIMARY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CONTACT

### GULF COUNTY

Economic Development Council (EDC)  
Post Office Box 429  
Port St. Joe, FL 32457  
(850) 229-1901

Web Site: [www.gulfcountyedc.org](http://www.gulfcountyedc.org)  
E-Mail: [gulfedc@gtcom.net](mailto:gulfedc@gtcom.net)

**Alan McNair**  
Executive Director  
Judy Kosin  
Administrative Assistant